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ABSTRACT

The studies reported in this paper had two purposes: (1) the construction of a measure of jealousy and (2) the use of this measure to test some of the prevalent beliefs concerning jealousy, thus providing construct validity data for the scale and expanding empirical understanding of jealousy. Using the rational approach to test construction, a 28-item test was constructed. It was hypothesized that this scale would correlate positively with romantic love, insecurity, and low-self-esteem, and negatively with separate identities. It was also hypothesized that it would not correlate with liking. These relationships were found except for the positive correlations between jealousy and insecurity for men, jealousy and low self-esteem for both sexes. It was concluded that enough evidence of construct validity was found to warrant further use of the scale for research purposes. It was suggested that open marriage relationships be based primarily on liking rather than romantic love so as to avoid jealousy. (Author)

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Jealousy, Romantic Love, and Liking[1]

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Jealousy, Romantic Love, and Liking

Erich Fromm (1941) suggests that the reality faced by modern man is one which offers him a great deal of freedom and individuality, on the one hand, and large amounts of insecurity and loneliness, on the other. One manifestation of this reality appears to be the break down of traditional marriage, with its lifelong exclusiveness, and its replacement by serial monogamy and open relationships (Francoeur & Francoeur, 1974b; O'Neill & O'Neill, 1972; Rogers, 1972). Serial monogamy involves having a series of exclusive heterosexual relationships, each terminated by divorce, while an open relationship involves maintaining a variety of heterosexual relationships (possibly sexual, though not necessarily) in addition to one primary relationship. Thus people today are coming, more and more, to enjoy the freedom to have many close heterosexual relationships and the personal growth often resulting from such relationships; but, at the same time, they are plagued by the insecurity and loneliness which accompanies this continual shifting of heterosexual alliances. One specific form this insecurity and loneliness has taken is an increase in jealousy, the negative emotion resulting from actual or threatened loss of love due to a rival. Although people have probably always been plagued by jealousy (Harrison, 1974), in the past social mores forbidding adultery made it an emotion almost almost exclusively encountered by young people going through the courting process, or neurotic and psychotic individuals who imagined rivals which did not really exist. Today, however, jealousy is a greater problem than it was in the past due to the fact that it is becoming increasingly likely that most people will eventually lose or have to share their partners.

Although jealousy is an important human problem, and will become in-

creasingly important if current trends toward serial monogamy and open relationships persist, empirical data on jealousy are limited to clinical (e.g., May, 1972) and cross-cultural observations (O'Neill & O'Neill, 1972). The purpose of the two studies reported below was to provide additional, more systematically collected, data on the topic of jealousy. Study I involved the development of a measure of jealousy, and Study II involved the use of this measure to test some of the beliefs concerning jealousy which exist in the speculative literature on the topic. The specific purpose of the second study was to collect data to evaluate the construct validity of the scale and to expand our understanding of jealousy.

Study I

Subjects

Thirty-one men and 53 women from introductory psychology classes at Western Illinois University participated in this study. At the time of the study all participants were dating someone, operationally defined as having been on at least three dates with that person and currently seeing him or her. Subjects received points toward their final grades for participating.

Procedure

In developing the measure of jealousy, the rational approach to test constuction was employed (Edwards, 1970). After reading a large number of professional and popular articles on jealousy, 39 items were written which seemed to measure jealousy. Each item was worded in such a way that a subject could either agree or disagree with it. Each item, also, contained a blank where a name could be placed (e.g., I feel possessive toward _____.). The subject was instructed to place the name of his or her, boy or girlfriend in the blank. Thus responses were specific to the relationship the subject

had with the person whose name was placed in the blank. These items were then given to the men and women participating in the study. The instructions accompanying the items were as follows:

> In response to each item place the name of your boy or girl friend in the blank of each item. Then use the scale below to express your feelings concerning the truth of the item. For example, if you feel that the item is "absloutely true" of you, place a "+4" in the blank before the item. If it is only "definitely true" place a "+3" in the blank, etc.
>
> +4 = absolutely true, agree completely
> +3 = definitely true
> +2 = true
> +1 = slightly true
> 0 = neither true nor false
> -1 = slightly false
> -2 = false
> -3 = definitely false
> -4 = absolutely false, disagree completely

An item analysis was then carried out by correlating item responses with total scores (Edwards, 1970).

Results

Twenty-eight items correlated .30 ($p < .005$) or greater with total scores. These items were used to form the Jealousy Scale. The items that follow are examples of Scale items and their correlations with total scores:

I feel possessive toward _____. ($r = .69$)

If _____ were helpful to someone of the opposite sex, I would feel jealous. ($r = .67$)

If _____ were to see an old friend of the opposite sex and respond with a great deal of happiness, I would be annoyed. ($r = .62$)

Of the 28 items, seven were phrased in the negative; thus, confounding with the acquiescent response set was avoided, at least, to some extent (Rorer, 1965).

Study II

The purpose of this study was to use the Jealousy Scale to test some

of the beliefs concerning jealousy which exist in the speculative literature on this topic. In this manner it was hoped that some construct validity data would be provided for the Jealousy Scale (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955) and our understanding of jealousy would be increased. One of the oldest beliefs concerning the causes of jealousy is that it is a part of romantic love, or the intense emotion which causes an individual to seek to become totally involved in his or her beloved. Andreas Capellanus (1957), the twelth century author of The Art of Courtly Love, wrote (p. 17):

> But there is another reason why husband and wife cannot love each other and that is that the very substance of love, without which true love cannot exist--I mean jealousy--is in such a case very much frowned upon and they should avoid it like the pestilence; but lovers should always welcome it as the mother and the nurse of love.

The article entitled "Innocent Flirtation", appearing in Good Housekeeping in 1968, suggests that this belief is still prevelant today. In this article the author describes how innocent flirtation on the part of her husband and herself produced mutual jealousy and rekindled the fire of romantic love in their marriage. Finally, the O'Neills (1972) in their book, Open Marriage, suggest that "romantic love is blind, and often irrational" and as a result usually leads to jealousy. On the basis of the conjectures of these authorities, the first hypothesis was formulated:

1.1. The more romantic a relationship, the more likely it will involve jealousy.

It is interesting to note that Capellanus feels that romantic love, because it leads to jealousy, should not be the primary basis of marriage. The O'Neills (1972) make a similar point suggesting that liking, not romantic love, should be the primary basis of marriage:

> Romantic love is blind, and often irrational; liking, however is rational,

and based upon respect rather than passion. This is not to say that passion is unimportant, but only to demonstrate that a love that encompases both liking and passion is far stronger than love based solely on passion. Without liking and the respect that it implys we believe that true open love cannot be achieved, for mutual respect is essential to the establishment of identity, equality and open communication between mates (pp. 244-5).

Although neither Capellanus or the O'Neills state that liking does not produce jealousy, their discussions of romantic love, liking, marriage and jealousy seem to imply that this is the case. On the basis of this thinking the second hypothesis was formulated:

2. Liking and jealousy are not related.

A more recent belief concerning the causes of jealousy is the idea that it is the result of insecurity, low self-esteem, dependency, and lack of personal identity or, in general, a neurotic personality. During the 1950's and 1960's popular magazines were flooded with articles which took marital fidelity for granted and assumed that anyone who was married had no real reason for feeling jealousy. Thus people feeling jealousy had to be neurotic (Greenson, 1955; Imler, 1955; Lagemann, 1960; Mace, 1962; May, 1972; Oursler, 1950; T. Rubin, 1971; Sugarmann & Hochstein, 1965; Viorst, 1970; Wood, 1964). The following quote from Mace (1962) is typical of this position:

> But if the woman is not self-confident, if she is the sort of person who consistently doubts her own worth and her own attractiveness, her moment of jealousy, instead of flashing off as it flashed on, sets off a chain reaction that may harass her for a long time.
>
> She does not heed the advice not to wait up, but lies awake until her husband returns from his business engagement, conjecturing about the date he is probably keeping with another.... This is <u>abnormal</u> jealousy, a painful destructive emotion, which may end by defeating its own purpose (p. 56).

In the 1970's the notion that jealousy is the result of a weak and neurotic personality still persists, though for slightly different reasons

Comfort, 1974; Davids, 1974; Francoeur & Francoeur, 1974a; Lawrence, 1974; O'Neill & O'Neill, 1972). Since marital fidelity can no longer be taken for granted a new basis for finding jealousy irrational has had to be found. The new basis is that jealousy is self-defeating. Jealousy, it is felt, only limits the happiness and freedom of the individual and his or her partner and thus cannot be a characteristic of an adequate personality. This reasoning is well exemplified by the following quote from the O'Neills (1972, p. 237):

> The idea of sexually exclusive monogamy and possession of another breeds deep-rooted dependencies, infantile and childish emotions, and insecurities. The more insecure you are, the more you will be jealous. Jealousy, says Abraham Maslow, "practically always breeds further rejection and deeper insecurity." And jealousy, like a destructive cancer, breeds more jealousy. It is never, then, a function of love but of our insecurities and dependencies. It is the fear of a loss of love and it destroys that very love. It is detrimental to and a denial of a loved one's personal identity. Jealousy is a serious impediment, then, to the development of security and identity, and our closed marriage concepts of possession are directly at fault.

To combat dependency and jealousy the O'Neills advocate that individuals work to maintain separate identities from their partners and encourage their partners to do the same. From the sources discussed above three more hypotheses were formulated:

3. The more insecure an individual is the more vulnerable he or she is to jealousy.

4. The lower an individual's self-esteem, the more vulnerable he or she is to jealousy.

5. Members of a couple who cultivate separate identities are less vulnerable to jealousy than members who seek to merge their identities.

To test these hypotheses dating and married couples were given the Jealousy Scale and a variety of other scales and the results were inter-

correlated.

Method

Subjects

Seventy-nine dating or married couples from Western Illinois University participated in this study. All couples had been on three or more dates and were currently seeing each other. The average age of the women was 18.76 years and that of the men was 19.52 years. The modal year in school for the women was that of freshman and that of the men was sophomore. The average amount of time a couple had been going together was 9.9 months. In most cases one member of each couple was a student in an introductory psychology or personality class and this person received points toward his or her final grade for participating.

Scales

In addition to the Jealousy Scale, Z. Rubin's (1973) Romantic Love and Liking Scales, The Insecurity Scale of Maslow, Birsh, Stein, and Honigmann (1945), and Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale were used. The Romantic Love and Liking Scales were used to test the first two hypotheses while the Insecurity and Self-Esteem Scales were used to test Hypotheses 3 and 4. A three item questionnaire, devised by the authors, was used to test the last hypothesis:

1. Do you encourage your partner to engage in activities which interest him or her but do not interest you?

2. Do you and your partner do everything together?

3. Do you encourage your partner to maintain an identity separate from your own?

Responses were made on seven point scales ranging from "definitely false" to "definitely true" and all scoring was in the direction of separate iden-

tities.

Procedure

The scales were administered to the 79 couples in a large auditorium. To facilitate honest responding couples were separated by having the men sit on one side of the auditorium and the women on the other. Subjects were also reassured that their data would remain confidential.

Results

On the Jealousy Scale the men obtained an average score of +1.49 (s.d. = 32.15) and the women obtained an average score of -11.36 (s.d. = 32.45). These means are significantly different from each other ($t = 2.50$, $df = 1/156$, $p < .05$), suggesting that men experience more jealousy than women. The internal consistency reliability of the scale for this population was .96 (coefficient alpha, Nunnally, 1967).

The results were analyzed by correlating Jealousy scores with scores on the other scales, separately for men and women. (See Table 1.) The significant correlations of .47 ($p < .005$) for men and .41 ($p < .005$) for women between jealousy and romantic love supported the first hypothesis. The more romantic a relationship, the more likely it involved jealousy. The insignificant correlation of .15 between jealousy and liking for women supported the second hypothesis but the significant correlation of .28 ($p < .01$) for men did not. This is probably an artifact, however, due to the high correlation (.52) between liking and romantic love for men. When a partial correlation between jealousy and liking was computed, partialling out romantic love, the correlation became a nonsignificant .05. Thus the second hypothesis was supported for both men and women; liking and jealousy were not found to be related.

Insert Table 1 about here

The significant correlation of .26 ($p < .025$) between jealousy and insecurity for women supported the third hypothesis, however, the insignificant correlation of .18 for men failed to support it. Insecurity made the women vulnerable to jealousy but it did not affect the men. The insignificant correlations between jealousy and self-esteem for both men and women failed to support the fourth hypothesis that the lower an individual's self-esteem, the more vulnerable to jealousy he or she would be. The significant negative correlations between jealousy and the separate identity questions for both men (-.27, $p < .025$; -.32, $p < .005$; -.39, $p < .005$) and women (-.35, $p < .005$; -.40, $p < .005$; -.44, $p < .005$) supported the fifth hypothesis. Members of couples who cultivated separate identities were less vulnerable to jealousy than members who sought to merge their identities.

Discussion

Confirmation of Hypotheses 1, 2, and 5 suggests that the Jealousy Scale has some construct validity and, thus, should be used in further research. Why Hypotheses 2 and 3 were not fully supported cannot be determined from these data. It may be that these two hypotheses are false or it may be that the Insecurity and Self-Esteem Scales were not sensitive enough to find the hypothesized correlations. The latter would seem to be true in view of the fact that insecurity was significantly correlated with jealousy for women and the fifth hypothesis, which dealt with a form of personal inadequacy (lack of separate identities), was confirmed. If measures of insecurity and felt inferiority with respect to heterosexual

relationships were constructed and correlated with jealousy the hypothesized correlations would probably be found. It is interesting to note, however, that relationship variables seem to be much more important than personality variables in predicting jealousy.

The discovery that men were more jealous than women was not expected. A couple of explanations for this difference, however, can be given. It may be that men are more vulnerable to jealousy because in our culture they are given less training in interpersonal skills than women (Jourard, 1974). Or men may be more vulnerable to jealousy because in our culture it is a greater insult to a man (macho) to lose a woman to a rival than for a woman to lose a man to a rival (Farber, 1974). More research is necessary before a definite explanation to this interesting sex difference can be given.

What kind of answer does this research suggest for the problem of jealousy which is emerging along with the current rise in serial monogamy and open relationships? Essentially this research seems to support the solution offered by the O'Neills, that open relationships should be firmly based on liking. Since romantic love produces jealousy while liking does not, to have an open relationship and still avoid jealousy, the relationship must consist mainly of liking. If an individual cannot or will not do with out large amounts of romantic love, then he or she should not try to establish an open relationship (unless, of course, he or she is willing, also, to suffer jealousy.)

With respect to modern man's "condemnation" to freedom and individuality, and insecurity and loneliness, it appears that it is possible for people to have both their freedom and individuality and escape insecurity

and loneliness if they are willing to play down romantic love and work hard to establish friendships. Interestingly, Fromm (1956), in The Art of Loving, comes to, what seems to be, this same conclusion. He suggests that romantic love, or "symbiotic fusion" as he prefers to call it, is an escape from freedom and individuality in a vain attempt to relieve loneliness and insecurity. Only through mature love, or "union under the condition of preserving one's integrity" (liking?) can an individual maintain his or her freedom and still attain union.

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Table 1

Correlates of Jealousy

Men

	Jeal.	Rom. Love	Like	Insec.	Self-E.	Separate Identities 1	2	3
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	---	.47*	.28*	.18	.00	-.27*	-.32*	-.39*
2		---	.52*	-.03	-.04	.04	-.44*	-.08
3			---	-.15	.03	.10	-.35*	-.13
4				---	-.40*	-.08	-.14	-.04
5					---	.05	.38*	.04
6						---	.02	.25*
7							---	.29*
8								---

Women

1	---	.41*	.15	.26*	-.16	-.35*	-.40*	-.44*
2		---	.42*	-.04	.04	-.01	-.41*	-.02
3			---	-.15	.26*	.06	-.27*	.26*
4				---	-.77*	.00	-.17	-.16
5					---	-.02	.27*	.19
6						---	.28*	.55*
7							---	.30*
8								---

* These correlations are significant at the .05 level or greater.